reservation to Backward Classes in educational institutions is under active consideration of the Government and a decision is likely to be taken soon in this regard.

Scheme for Irrigation Sector

1822. SHRI CHHATAR SINGH DARBAR : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any concrete scheme for irrigation sector have been formulated by the Government in view of the uncertainty of monsoon in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if so, the expected increase in the quantity of food grain production in the country consequent upon the implementation of the scheme; and

(d) the number of farmers likely to be benefited?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) Normal rainfall is predicted over most parts of the country. From 1st June to 16th July, 1997 the cumulative rainfall was normal to excess in 26 out of 35 sub divisions and 64% districts of the country.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Espionage Activity in DRDO

1823. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Intelligence Bureau officials have recently seized some floppy discs and documents containing information about scientific activity at the Defence Research Organisation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the information as in the discs has been decoded;

(d) whether the persons connected with the spying have been apprehended; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (e) The floppies and documents seized by Intelligence Bureau were analysed by Defence Research and Development Organisation and it is confirmed that these floppies and documents did not contain any information on scientific activities of Defence Research and Development Organisation.

[Translation]

Loss of Life and Property in Narmada Valley

1824. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether there was loss of life and property in urban and rural areas of some districts in the Narmada Valley region of Madhya Pradesh on May 22, 1997;

(b) if so, whether any assessment has been made to ascertain the damage caused in rural and urban areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Narmada Valley region is lagging behind in the country;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Madhya Pradesh Government have formulated any scheme for the rehabilitation and progress of the Narmada Valley region;

(g) if so, the details thereof;

(h) whether any scheme have been formulated to include the above region in the Ninth Five Year Plan and the central assistance provided in this regard; and

(i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) to (i) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Air Services to SAARC Countries

1825. SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether a decision was taken in SAARC countries conference held in May, 1997 in Maldive to start direct air services among the seven member countries;

(b) if so, the action taken/progress made since then in this regard; and

(c) the time by which these services are likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c) At the 9th SAARC Sumit held in Male in May, 1997, there was a decision that the Civil Aviation authorities of the member states should meet in the near future to explore the possibility of establishing direct services between SAARC capitals. The first meeting of the Civil Aviation Authorities of the member states is scheduled to be held in Dhaka on 27-29 August, 1997.